Office of Private Voluntary Cooperation -
American Schools and Hospitals Abroad
(PVC-ASHA)
Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance
United States Agency for International Development

2003 PVC-ASHA ANNUAL PVO CONFERENCE
October 14-15, 2003

"USAID, PVOS AND LOCAL NGOS: MISSION PRIORITIES
AND PERSPECTIVES"

Hotel Washington
515 15 th Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C.

PVC-ASHA ANNUAL PVO CONFERENCE

USAID, PVOS AND LOCAL NGOS:
MISSION PRIORITIES AND PERSPECTIVES

October 14-15, 2003

2003 PVC-ASHA PVO Conference Agenda

Dr. Jerry VanSant, Terry Sanford Institute of Public Policy, Duke University
Keynote Speech: Challenges of Local NGO Sustainability

Judith Gilmore, Director, PVC-ASHA
Welcome: PVC-ASHA Vision and Direction

Tom Kennedy, Chief, Program Development and Management, PVC-ASHA
PVC-ASHA Program Implementation

Emily McPhie, Chief, Policy, Planning and Outreach, PVC-ASHA
Dana Ott, Program Specialist, Policy, Planning and Outreach, PVC-ASHA
PVC-ASHA Verification, Documentation and Utilization of Information

Michael Magan, Director, USAID Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives
Faith-Based and Community Initiative

USAID Mission Perspectives (Summary)

Volunteers for Prosperity (Summary)

Issues and Resources for PVO Partners (Summary)

2003 PVC-ASHA PVO Conference Participant List

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AGENDA

<u>Tuesday, October 14</u>

8:15 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Registration and Continental Breakfast Ballroom, Lower Level
9:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.	Welcome Ballroom, Lower Level Judy Gilmore, Director, PVC-ASHA Roger Winter, Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance
9:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Keynote: Challenges of Local NGO Sustainability Ballroom, Lower Level Dr. Jerry VanSant, Terry Sanford Institute of Public Policy Duke University
10:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.	Coffee Break
10:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.	PVC-ASHA Vision and Direction Ballroom Lower Level Judy Gilmore, Director, PVC-ASHA Emily McPhie, Chief, Program, Policy, and Outreach Division, PVC-ASHA Tom Kennedy, Chief, Program Development and Management Division

11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m.	Lunch Session: Orientation for Interested and New PVOs and Staff Ballroom

Moderator: Adele Liskov, Deputy Director, PVC-ASHA
- Overview of Agency reorganization
- New Agency website
- New conditions of PVO registration
- Washington Bureaus' Grant Programs

Presenters:
Emily McPhie, PVC-ASHA
Mary Newton, PVC-ASHA
Joyce Holfield, Bureau for Global Health
Scott Kleinberg, Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade

1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Panel Discussion: USAID Missions' Perspectives on Local NGOs Ballroom Lower Level

Moderator: Adele Liskov, Deputy Director, PVC-ASHA
- Strengths and weakness
- Problems encountered
- Differences between working in conflict settings and sustainable development countries
- How Missions work with local NGOs
- How capacity strengthening of local NGOs fit in
- How Missions identify and select local NGOs partners
- When Missions work with U.S. and international PVOs
- PVO issues and concerns

Panel:
Terry Myers, USAID/Russia
Patti Buckles, USAID/Peru
Dirk Dijkerman, USAID/South Africa
David Adams, USAID/Haiti
Andrew Sisson, USAID/REDSO
Dawn Liberi, USAID/ Nigeria
Denny Robertson, USAID/Caucasus

3:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.	Break
3:45 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.	Continuation of Panel Discussion Ballroom Lower Level
5:00 p.m.- 7:00 p.m.	Reception

Parkview Room, Lobby Level

9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.	New Administration Initiatives Ballroom Lower Level
	Andrew Natsios, Administrator, USAID John Bridgeland, Assistant to the President and Director of the USA Freedom Corps: Volunteers for Prosperity
9:30 a.m.-10: 00 a.m.	Michael Magan, Director, USAID Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives
10:00 a.m.– 11:00 a.m.	Concurrent Sessions
	Cooperative Development Program's Request for Applications *Federal Room, Mezzanine Level*
	Thomas Carter, Technical Advisor, CDP Program, PVC-ASHA
	Ocean Freight Reimbursement Program's Request for Applications Parkview Room, Mezzanine Level
	Adele Liskov, Deputy Director, Tom Kennedy, Chief, Program Development and Management Division, PVC-ASHA
	American Schools and Hospitals Abroad Program *Capital Room, Mezzanine Level*
	Carmelita Maness, Acting Chief, ASHA Division
11:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.	Coffee Break
11:15 a.m. –12:30 p.m.	Plenary Ballroom Lower Level

PVC-ASHA –Panel Discussion on Results Reporting
- Performance Management Plan (PMP)
- Detailed Implementation Plan (PMP)
- Analytical Agenda
- Outreach

Panel:
Emily McPhie, Tom Kennedy, Dana Ott, PVC-ASHA

Challenges of Local NGO Sustainability[1]

Jerry VanSant
Duke Center for International Development
Duke University

1 Introduction

I am honored to be among you today for what I hope will be a time of mutual learning.

The comedian George Burns once said that the secret to a first-rate speech is to have a good beginning and a good ending and then to keep them as close together as possible! In that spirit I will try not to ask you to listen to me too long in order that there will be time left to hear from you.

It will not be news to this audience that currently the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is more critical and more strategic in the process of global human development than at any time before. I will talk some about why this is so because it will help us understand the changing roles of NGOs, implications for building NGO capacity, and how NGOs can advance the next step from capacity to sustainable roles in the development of a vibrant and free civil society.

My goal today is to highlight certain themes around which there is enormous expertise in this room. If these remarks help trigger a productive exchange of ideas and experience among you today and tomorrow, then I will count this keynote a success and hope you do as well.

I would like to begin by noting some background issues and contextual factors that make the topic of local NGO capacity and sustainability so relevant today.

1.1 Changing NGO Roles

You all are aware of and, indeed, contributors to the evolution of NGOs through the generations of activity described by David Korten as

- *first, relief and welfare* (involving primarily the delivery of inputs such as humanitarian assistance),
- second, *small scale local development* (involving service delivery and building of some local capacities for self-help, and
- third, *sustainable development systems* (involving grassroots mobilization and policy advocacy).

In his recent book, *Worlds Apart*, John Clark describes the same progression as moving from a focus on poor individuals to poor communities to poor societies.

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[1] Keynote remarks prepared for the USAID/PVC-ASHA Annual PVO Conference, 14 October, 2003

The point, of course, is not that a later stage of this evolution is necessarily superior or that all PVOs and NGOs should strive to advance along this continuum. Each generation of activity is an important part of the development process, whether responding to humanitarian needs, supporting local development, or engaging in advocacy for policies that support voice and empowerment for civil society.

At the same time, however, there is growing recognition that, as stated in the current USAID Office of Private and Voluntary Cooperation (PVC) strategic plan, "the ability of NGO groups to influence national and sectoral policies is crucial to the viability of such groups and to the success of their programs."

1.2 The Emerging Focus on Civil Society and Governance

In his landmark book, *Development as Freedom,* Amartya Sen defines development as the process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy. These freedoms include political, economic, and social opportunity as well as transparency guarantees, and protective security. Each of these freedoms requires both a healthy civil society and sound governance.

Indeed, we have learned that good governance represents a critical path toward sustainable human development. The experience of many countries suggests that weak governance and slow economic development go hand-in-hand while improved governance fosters development success. In short, *governance matters!*

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has put it this way: AThe quality of management of a nation=s economic, social, and political affairs, or governance, is the single most important influence on the extent to which its human and natural resources are used for the benefit of all, now and in the future.@

We know that good governance requires both citizen empowerment and the acceptance by those who govern of accountability to those who are served, with priorities based on broad societal consensus. This means among other things that the voices of the poor and vulnerable are heard in the determination of policy and in the allocation of resources. The role of a free civil society and all its elements as critical partners with government cannot be overemphasized.

Strengthening relations between government and citizens thus becomes a key leverage point for increasing citizen access and influence. Two principal strategies to improve these relations are creating linkages and building capacity. NGO's are particularly well-placed to implement these strategies in local and regional settings. Many are doing it. And many of you are helping them. More on this later.

1.3 Contextual Factors

The context for development is ever changing. NGOs, like all effective organizations, must endeavor to master the dynamic environment in which they pursue their missions. Five factors in that environment that I would like to note briefly this morning are globalization, technology, networking, decentralization, and USAID/PVC strategic direction. Each of these factors presents both challenge and opportunity.

Globalization means the elimination or reduction of barriers to human interaction across national boundaries. It's dimensions are economic, cultural, and political. As put by Kofi Annan, "Today's real borders are not between nations, but between powerful and powerless, free and fettered, privileged and humiliated." We might add that development often is the ticket across these borders.

Technology has made globalization possible by opening doors to the global exchange of information. For NGOs, technology enables organizational linkages, constituency mobilization, public information, and fund raising in ways unimaginable in the very recent past.

Networking is an aspect of globalization and is a major strategic device for NGOs. Networks contribute to adaptability and problem-solving. They can more swiftly discover and adapt new techniques. Networking, as John Clark notes, does not mean working only with like-minded groups; it means building partnerships to tackle issues that would be impossible without these alliances.

Decentralization and related development emphases on democracy and civil society create a particular opportunity for NGOs with core competence and credibility in mobilizing citizen voice.

PVC's strategy responds to and adds to the changing context we face. It builds on a recognition of the role of NGOs in civil society, an increased emphasis on partnership, and recognition of advocacy as an essential program activity.

Each of these contextual factors changes the playing field for NGOs in significant ways. You know this and you will be returning to these themes as this conference proceeds.

2   NGO Capacity

Recognition of the changing – and important – role of NGOs for development and an understanding of the changing context in which they work has led to a growing focus on NGO capacity as an agenda for NGO partners be they donors, international NGOs or PVOs, or other support organizations.

Part of this growing attention is a proliferation of tools or methodologies for measuring NGO capacity. Generally, the creators of these tools correctly recognize that how they are used may be more important than any assessment results themselves. Like any good process tool, organizational assessment can facilitate and provide structure to a participatory process of organizational diagnosis and change. In fact, the USAID/PVC strategic plan cites as a lesson learned the reality that organizational assessments in and of themselves can catalyze change.

Assessment tools usually offer a set of measurement categories or indicators. Often these are qualitative so that measurement takes place along a defined descriptive scale of development. Obviously, the specific items worth measuring will vary depending on the nature and purpose of the organization.

Likewise, benchmarks along a scale of, say, financial strength, need to be adapted to the context of a specific organization and its own stage of development.

The process of defining measurement categories and descriptive points of development in those categories is part of the potential learning process of organizational assessment. Therefore organizational self-assessment or an interactive process involving both outside partners and the NGO being assessed is usually more useful than any kind of external evaluation. After all, the most important clients of any evaluation are the managers who can buy-in to and then act on the information.

This said, it may be useful to consider a set of generic categories of NGO organizational capacity, recognizing the importance of adapting these to any particular setting.

I have reviewed a number of the excellent organizational assessment tools proposed in recent years (several developed with USAID assistance). There is a great deal of similarity among these frameworks reflecting an emerging consensus on the attributes that make for effective and sustainable organizations. Drawing from this good work I propose the following composite set of measurement categories in three clusters, organizational resources, organizational performance, and organizational sustainability.

Organizational Resources represents the attributes an organization possesses or controls and consists of its basic legal structure, assured access to human, financial, technical, and other resources, and its management systems and structure, including performance management systems. In short, this category captures what the organization has to work with at a giving point in time.

Organizational Performance measures an organization's programs, services, or other impacts as a result of how effectively it employs its organizational resources. For NGOs, external relations (for example, networks and linkages) and the empowerment of constituents or broader civil society frequently are intended outcomes. Organizational performance assesses both efficiency and effectiveness or, in short, what an organization does with the resources it possesses.

Organizational Sustainability incorporates more forward-looking attributes such as organizational autonomy, learning capacity, and leadership which, in turn, help ensure sustainability and self-reliance in the future. This category attempts to capture where the organization is going in the future. We will return to the issue of organizational sustainability later on.

Now, in case any of you want a magic bullet for external organizational assessment, let me suggest the following: Ask members of the organization from the top echelon to the bottom what the mission of that organization is. In most cases you will get no coherent answer or a mix of contradictory answers. In the rare case that you get a confident and consistent articulation of the mission, vision, or purpose of the organization you will know you have a winner. This method, which can be done in an hour or less, will tell you more about the quality and, especially, the future of an organization than most high powered (and expensive) external organizational assessments!

3   NGOs and Advocacy

If, for example, an NGO involved in advocacy or planning to do so were to engage in an assessment process, then it would probably want to generate some relevant indicators in the organizational resources and organizational performance categories as a basis for benchmarking and defining a spectrum of performance expectations. Typically such an index of accomplishment might range from a defined level of advocacy-based research and analysis capacity through some specific communications and influence activities (such as, for example, what Luis Crouch, my former colleague at RTI International, called "the power of convocation") to, finally, some distinct policy changes or new legislation resulting from the advocacy efforts.

Because advocacy is such an important activity for NGOs moving into the policy arena or, in Clark's terms, intending to have broad societal impact, the topic is worth some more detailed attention here.

Legitimate NGOs typically are driven by values and focus on social change. Their flexibility and mobility may vest them with particular opportunity to take and learn from strategic risks. These and other common NGO attributes create unique opportunities for policy influence, especially at the local level where, as Julie Fisher notes, government may be more susceptible to independent sector influence.

3.1   Government Policy Toward NGOs

There are, of course, great variations in government receptiveness to NGO voice be it in the form of well-researched policy advocacy or the pleadings of loosely organized pressure groups. At the extreme, governments may actively repress all independent citizen voice, including NGOs, except as they serve as a mouthpiece for official policy.

More commonly, government may effectively control NGOs by co-opting them with either carrot or stick kinds of incentives (and corresponding disincentives to straying from the script). This approach is particularly common when a controlling government sees political benefit in facilitating expansion of NGO service delivery activities to proceed.

In a more positive vein, governments may encourage NGOs to engage in gap-filling service delivery activities. This, in fact, is very common at local levels in the United States where non-profit organizations play a large role in such services as homeless shelters, health services, and affordable housing.

In some cases, where mutual trust develops, government may invite NGOs to the policy making table to benefit from their experience and, in some cases, research on a public policy issue. Of course, such a partnership is rarely characterized by an adversarial stance on key policy questions, a dilemma to which we shall return later.

The nature of government policy toward the NGO sector is determined by a number of factors including the type of regime, political culture, and the degree of political stability in a given country. As you would expect, pluralism and political space" correlate with a healthy and active NGO sector.

3.2 NGO Policy toward Government

Meanwhile, NGOs themselves also have a choice regarding their policy toward government. Some may consciously choose political isolation in order to focus on building an appropriate base of support, independent networks, and their own approaches to development. NGOs that adopt this strategy normally are focused on service delivery more than advocacy. In some cases, however, it can be a tactic to maintain legitimacy in countries where governments are seen as failing or corrupt.

A second choice is cooperation with government, whether at the project or strategic level. This strategy provides leverage for both sides and, at its best, allows for constructive dialogue on development issues. As noted earlier, however, cooperating NGOs may feel comfortable only with a limited set of policy influence tactics – those that are not likely to upset the cooperative relationship with government that, among other things, is an important source of funding. I sense that most USAID registered PVOs have adopted this strategy of cooperation.

A third strategy, not necessarily contradictory with cooperation, is one of more active policy advocacy where an NGO engages in legal and lobbying efforts and even electoral politics. This approach probably is most often associated with some environmental groups in this country but there are, of course, any number of non-governmental interest groups that choose this option whether or not they engage in any programmatic activity of the type we would associate with developmental NGOs.

These strategies are not mutually exclusive; an organization may try to take all these paths at the same time. But there are likely to be some bumps in the road.

3.3 Successful NGO Involvement in the Policy Arena

Research into NGO policy involvement tells us a good bit about the organizational attributes that correlate with effective policy engagement. We may summarize these as:

-   *Credibility,* based on technical expertise, especially if drawn from a mix of field experience and sound analysis;

-   *Scale of Influence,* reflected in the scope of activities, the strength of institutional alliances, and the power of the NGO's constituency; and

-   *Autonomy*, reflected in independence and the freedom to innovate and make decisions with a high degree of discretion.

These attributes add up to leverage which, of course, is enhanced if the political environment is relatively favorable.

3.4 Dilemmas for Local NGOs

This range of issues surrounding NGO advocacy points to several trade-offs that any NGO needs to carefully consider before making a strategic decision to enter the policy arena or, indeed, to

not do so. Discussion around these issues, in the context of an organizational self assessment that facilitates some serious reflection, can be a learning opportunity for any local NGO. These dilemmas are:

- *Investment in learning versus investment in doing*: Serious policy influence usually requires documented learning.   But most NGOs pride themselves on being action-oriented, quick to respond to needs or to adapt to particular local situations.   The values and skills that support commendable NGO flexibility and action-orientation, however, are not always consistent with reflection and learning nor the investment they require. Nor is research a particularly compelling draw for fund-raising. So this trade-off between learning and doing becomes a strategic dilemma that an NGO needs address proactively.

- *Policy awareness versus policy influence*: Understanding and mastering the environment is a key tenet of good strategic management. So every NGO should develop the skills and mechanisms to understand the policy environment and how it will affect what they are trying to do. Whether, however, any NGO goes beyond policy awareness to policy influence is another key strategic choice that may have significant ramifications for its future work, both positive and negative.

- *Insulation versus influence*: As we noted earlier, insulation from government attention or other activities that bring attention to an NGO, especially controversy, can be a deliberately chosen and effective strategy in some circumstances and for some organizations. Such a strategy, however, may often be inconsistent with any drive toward policy advocacy and influence whether direct or indirect. Here again the issue is not whether one option is inherently better than the other but rather that any given NGO make the choice deliberately and control its own future strategy.

- *Independence versus partnership*: There is a price to any partnership ranging from the need to make strategic compromises to being co-opted by a larger partner with its own agenda. The risks are especially large when a local NGO partners with a large foreign partner or any NGO or PVO partners with government. The risks may be worth it in the interests of expanding scale or obtaining support for key activities. And many U.S. PVOs, for example, are working creatively to build partnerships with local NGOs based on equality and mutual self-respect. But even the appearance of being co-opted by a foreign partner may damage a local NGO's credibility and effectiveness, especially as a voice in the policy arena.

These dilemmas represent opportunities for effective strategic choice by an NGO. Too often, however, organizations back into one or the other horns of these dilemmas due to external pressures, usually the pressure to raise funds or satisfy a stronger partner.

This reality brings us back to the heart of the issue for this conference – NGO sustainability. Organizations with sustainable capacity are much more likely to make autonomous decisions than organizations with what we might call dependent capacity.

4   From Capacity to Sustainability

Thinking about autonomous decision making capacity as a key marker of NGO sustainability takes us back to the third category of organizational assessment that I suggested earlier, organizational sustainability. I propose your consideration of three sub-categories of organizational sustainability: autonomy, learning, and leadership. These attributes enable the organization to transcend the sum of its component parts. They also are the most predictive indicators I can think of to assess *future* organizational capacity.

4.1 Organizational Autonomy

Autonomy is the organization's degree of independence from other organizations or forces in its environment. Effective autonomy is reflected in the power to make decisions about basic matters such as organizational goals, policy, budget, hiring practices, pay and incentives, and external linkages.

Julie Fisher identifies several keys to organizational autonomy. These include

- being driven by mission rather than by donors or other funding sources,
- financial diversification from any single-source patron,
- a mass constituency,
- technical expertise,
- strategic knowledge on development issues, and
- social and managerial knowledge.

I'd also like to emphasize the importance for building autonomy of commitment to a clear sense of purpose. Institutions with a clear vision and internal consensus regarding that vision (often referred to as "alignment") usually employ resources effectively toward goal achievement because they understand what they stand for.   Autonomous organizations also tend to conduct programs or activities that earn a high degree of acceptance by relevant stakeholders and, in turn, contribute in demonstrable ways to organizational resources and performance -- for example, by attracting new funding, enhancing organizational learning, or broadening organizational influence.

4.2 Organizational Learning

Much has been written and said about learning organizations and time does not permit much examination of the topic this morning. Recall, however, that organizational assessment itself can be a powerful learning experience if done by an organization for itself or done in a highly interactive faction with a facilitating donor, consultant or partner organization. In fact just about anything an NGO does can be turned into a learning experience if done with creative attention to process. In my view, fundamental organizational functions like planning, organizing, performance management, and human resource management all should be seen as key learning opportunities. For this reason, such functions should never be turned over to outsiders though consulting expertise may be employed in a supportive role.

Appropriate monitoring and evaluation of an NGO's actual programmatic or other activities also is an obvious tool for learning. These functions, too, should be handled internally and for the primary purpose of informing the organization's managers and staff, not just outsiders.

Learning from programmatic activities serves both better management and also, in many cases, better support for efforts to influence policymakers or civil society.

The keys, as USAID has noted as important capacity-building lessons learned, include creating a flow of information to support continuous improvements, the incorporation of diverse perspectives, and creating access to needed technical expertise.

Alan Fowler in his fine book on NGO management, *Striking a Balance,* provides some practical hints for building this kind of learning capacity. For example, an organization might establish a designated fund which staff can draw on for specific learning activities. A team-building emphasis can bring together different perspectives on the same issue, project, or evaluation. Planned thematic studies carried out each year can enhance a learning focus on key issues. Organizational incentives can be recast to reward learning, its application and its dissemination.

4.3 Leadership

Leadership is the most essential ingredient in organizational sustainability and the most important determinant of organizational performance. Key elements of leadership are vision, innovation, decisiveness, and a strong people orientation.

Vision comes from values. The management dimension of vision is having a focus. The leader with vision defines a clear and compelling agenda that is communicated effectively within the institution and leads to broad alignment with that agenda. *Innovation* means a willingness to constantly question and challenge what is going on. It means acceptance of intelligent risk-taking and openness to change. *Decisiveness* means being proactive --- taking the initiative to shape and influence the organization's future. A *people orientation* means, above all, an emphasis on enabling others in the organization to do their best through learning and growing.

Leadership is the controlling force in organizational development. It is the key to realistic assessment of problems and opportunities, establishment of priorities, and the marshalling of internal and external resources to address these priorities. In effective institutions, leadership does not reside only at the top; elements of it are evident at various levels of the organization.

One function of leaders is to serve as a symbol -- a focal point for the institution's successes and failures. At the same time, good leaders maintain a sense of balance between future vision and everyday operational matters, or as Peter Drucker has said, "keeping your nose to the grindstone and your eyes to the hills".

The importance of leadership of this kind and of the resulting core values and internal alignment to those values in an organization cannot be overemphasized. These factors are key to sustaining and enhancing an institution's capacity to meet its objectives in a changing environment.

5   NGOs and Civil Society

While many countries have developed decentralization programs, corresponding policies of political liberalization that foster the growth of civil society are often lacking or weak. This is not surprising since civil society represents potentially uncontrollable opposition to political elites.

The development of civil society varies greatly among countries and regions. Latin America and the Philippines, for example, have a fairly rich tradition of professional and community associations that play a large role in the political and economic life of the countries. On the other hand, North and West Africa tend to have weak associative movements for historic cultural and political reasons. In the transition countries of the former Soviet Union, the NGO sector is booming but possesses little institutional history or tradition in terms of roles in society and relation to government.

We noted earlier that strengthening relations between government and civil society is a key leverage point for increasing citizen access and influence and that two principal strategies improve these relations: creating linkages and building capacity. Elections, public hearings, and other mechanisms for holding leaders accountable are a fundamental linkage that provides citizens the ability to influence decisions. Other linkages exist as a result of legislation that requires the local government to gather information from citizens regarding their needs and opinions, grant citizens access to council deliberations, or inform citizens of a pending government decision. For example, in the United States, state legislation typically requires local governments to have open meetings and public hearings before making certain key decisions such as budget approval, regulatory changes, and rezoning.

For the governance link between public officials and citizens to be effective, a useful interfaceCincorporating communication, collaboration, problem-solving, and mutually beneficial interactionCmust be created between government and a local community. These two sides generally have their own major goals and value systems that often are not well understood or closely linked. Indeed, they can be at odds with each other.

At the same time, as my Duke colleague Anirudh Krishna has argued, local government actions can energize communities and community engagement can improve local government performance. Local NGOs can help foster consent and participation that local governments cannot often muster on their own. And local governments can provide technical resources and arrange for coordination with higher levels of government, which community associations find hard to manage by themselves. Appropriately structured, partnerships between NGOs and local governments also can provide a basis of mutual learning at the local level.

Krishna adds that prospects for efficiency and sustainability are enhanced substantially when large numbers of citizens are well informed, when they can participate in making public decisions, and when they act collectively in support of these decisions. Accountability improves when citizens empowered with adequate information can collectively mount pressure on local officials. And democracy and equity are better served when large numbers of citizens know about programs and processes, when they can gain relatively easily access to public decision making forums, and when they act collectively to enforce their rights. NGOs can serve as key facilitators in this process of citizen awareness, empowerment, and voice.

John Clark presents the challenge in these terms: Local NGOs, he says, can blaze a new path and pull politicians with them; there is an emerging community of local NGO activists who are, with varying degrees of formality and design, networking globally to tackle common issues that concern citizens and citizenship throughout the world.

The concepts of NGO networking and partnership and the growing role of civil society all come together in the context of globalization and a revolution in technology to create a potent opportunity for local NGOs.

As partners of these NGOs, you from the USAID and the U.S. PVO communities have a significant facilitating role to play. It is my hope that the issues we have discussed this morning will trigger thought and action among you and your colleagues that will help you fulfill this powerful mandate.

Thank you.

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JUDY GILMORE/ REMARKS/ *PVC-ASHA VISION AND DIRECTION*
10.14.03
PVC-ASHA 2003 PVO CONFERENCE
HOTEL WASHINGTON, WASHINGTON, DC

[MS. GILMORE INTRODUCES PVC-ASHA STAFF]

THIS MORNING, JERRY--IN A THOUGHT-PROVOKING KEYNOTE ADDRESS--

TALKED ABOUT THE CRITICAL ROLE NGOS PLAY IN BUILDING CIVIL

SOCIETIES, AND THE EVOLVING CHALLENGES OF SUSTAINABILITY IN THE

NGO SECTOR .   HE TOUCHED ON MANY OF THE THEMES THAT PVC-ASHA

EMBRACES IN ITS EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN NGOS: NAMELY -- THE

IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP, ADVOCACY, BUILDING TRUST WITH LOCAL

GOVERNMENTS, KNOWLEDGE-SHARING, MEASURING RESULTS,

FLEXIBILITY, AND MOVING TOWARD AUTONOMY.

I'D LIKE TO TAKE A FEW MINUTES NOW TO TALK ABOUT HOW PVC-ASHA

PLANS TO LINK THESE ELEMENTS INTO ONE COORDINATED APPROACH

OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS.

FIRST, I'D LIKE TO EMPHASIZE THAT PVC-ASHA'S NEW 5-YEAR STRATEGY,

APPROVED LAST FALL, ARTICULATES A CLEAR ROLE FOR OUR OFFICE TO

SERVE AS A CENTER OF EXCELLENCE IN ORGANIZATIONAL

DEVELOPMENT, WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF CREATING HEALTHY AND

LASTING NGOS ACROSS ALL SECTORS AND IN TRANSITION STATES. AS

PART OF THIS PROCESS, WE'RE PLACING GREATER EMPHASIS ON THE

LEARNING CYCLE -- THROUGH SYSTEMATIC DOCUMENTATION AND

SHARING OF EXPERIENCES, BEST PRACTICES, TOOLS, AND TECHNIQUES IN

THE AREA OF ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY.

WE IN PVC-ASHA -- TOGETHER WITH PVOS, USAID FIELD STAFF AND MANY

OTHER DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS-- HAVE ACCUMULATED AN IMPRESSIVE

KNOWLEDGE BASE IN ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY. BUT THIS

DOESN'T MEAN THAT ANY ONE OF US KNOWS IT ALL, THAT THERE

AREN'T THINGS WE CAN'T LEARN, OR THAT THERE AREN'T QUESTIONS

THAT HAVEN'T BEEN ASKED.

WHILE MANY OF US TEND TO FOCUS ON OUR OWN TECHNICAL SECTOR—

WHETHER DUE TO BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS OR A DESIRE TO ACHIEVE

RESULTS THAT ARE READILY RECOGNIZED-- THERE ARE THINGS WE CAN

LEARN FROM TALKING WITH EACH OTHER. PVC-ASHA HOPES TO SERVE

AS A CENTRAL FACILITATOR AND RESOURCE CENTER IN THIS PROCESS,

BOTH WITHIN THE AGENCY AND WITH OUR PARTNERS. WE'D LIKE THE

PVO/NGO COMMUNITY TO VIEW US AS A TRULY CROSS-SECTORAL

BROKER IN IDENTIFYING BEST PRACTICES IN AND APPROACHES TO:

PROMOTING STRONG, SUSTAINABLE INSTITUTIONS;
IMPROVING SERVICE DELIVERY IN KEY SECTORS;

EXPANDING ADVOCACY FOR PUBLIC POLICIES AND PROGRAMS; AND

PARTNERING WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO LEVERAGE RESOURCES.

TWO EXCITING NEW INITIATIVES WILL GIVE US A HEAD START. THE NGO

SECTOR STRENGTHENING AND CAPABLE PARTNERS PROGRAMS,

TOGETHER WITH A NUMBER OF OTHER LONGSTANDING PVC-ASHA

EFFORTS, WILL EMPHASIZE CORE SKILLS WE THINK ARE CRITICAL TO

SUSTAINABILITY. THESE INCLUDE CUSTOMER SERVICE DELIVERY, WHICH

INCLUDES ADVOCACY AND ARTICULATING A MISSION; ORGANIZATIONAL

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT, INCLUDING LEADERSHIP, OPERATIONS

AND HUMAN RESOURCES; AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, INCLUDING

ESTABLISHMENT OF RIGOROUS INTERNAL FINANCIAL SYSTEMS AND

IMPROVED FUNDRAISING THROUGH DONOR SOLICITATION AND OTHER

INCOME-GENERATING ACTIVITIES.

IN ADDITION TO NGO STRENGTHENING, PVC-ASHA'S STRATEGY

UNDERSCORES THE IMPORTANCE OF BUILDING NGO NETWORKS.

WORKING TOGETHER, INDIVIDUAL NGOS CAN MULTIPLY THEIR

EFFECTIVENESS SEVERAL TIMES OVER BY PRESENTING A STRONG AND

UNIFIED VOICE WHEN POLICY AND RESOURCE DECISIONS HANG IN THE

BALANCE .   MOREOVER, NETWORKING ENABLES NGOS TO SHARE

EXPERIENCES AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND CONSISTENCY OF

SERVICE DELIVERY, WHICH AS WE ALL KNOW IS CRITICAL TO LONG-TERM VIABILITY.

IF SUSTAINABILITY IS THE *PRIMARY* THEME UNDERPINNING PVC-ASHA'S 5-YEAR STRATEGY, CONFLICT MITIGATION IS A CLOSE SECOND. LAST JANUARY, WE SPONSORED A TWO-DAY DIALOGUE ON WORKING IN CONFLICT WITH MORE THAN 40 PVO REPRESENTATIVES. OUR DISCUSSIONS REVEALED A NEED FOR STRONGER LINKS AMONG DISPARATE FIELD ACTIVITIES IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED COUNTRIES, AND WE HOPE TO SEE FURTHER COLLABORATION BETWEEN AND WITHIN THE USAID AND PVO COMMUNITIES IN THIS AREA.

TO FULLY ADDRESS THIS LEADING USAID PRIORITY, WHICH HAS TAKEN ON INCREASED IMPORTANCE WITH THE RECENT U.S. ENGAGEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN AND IRAQ, PVC-ASHA PROGRAMS WILL ENTER TARGET COUNTRIES EARLIER RATHER THAN LATER IN THE CRISIS CYCLE AND WORK TO STABILIZE LOCAL NGOS THAT MAY BE AT RISK OF COLLAPSE.

OVER THE LONG TERM, THESE PROGRAMS WILL PROVIDE VALUABLE INSIGHTS INTO HOW POST-CONFLICT INITIATIVES CAN BE BETTER DESIGNED.

WE ALSO LOOK FORWARD TO EXPANDING OUR EFFORTS TO PROMOTE PVO/NGO COLLABORATION WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR. USAID AND PVC-ASHA HAVE LONG PURSUED THIS AVENUE AS A WAY TO ENCOURAGE PROGRAM SCALE-UP AND SUSTAINABILITY, AND THE RECENTLY-LAUNCHED GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE IS EMBLEMATIC OF THE AGENCY'S INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMING IN THIS AREA. IN THE PAST, APPROXIMATELY ONE-THIRD OF PVC'S PVO MATCHING GRANT RECIPIENTS HAVE PARTNERED WITH THE BUSINESS SECTOR TO EXPAND THEIR PROGRAMS. WE'D LIKE TO SEE A SIMILAR TREND TAKE ROOT WITH LOCAL NGOS AND EXPAND TO INCLUDE PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AS WELL.

OF COURSE, FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY LIES AT THE HEART OF ANY NGO'S ABILITY TO SURVIVE LONG-TERM. PVC-ASHA AND THE PVO COMMUNITY CAN DO A LOT TO ASSIST NGOS IN EXPANDING THEIR RESOURCE BASE – THIS MIGHT INCLUDE SEEKING OUT NEW INCOME-GENERATING OPPORTUNITIES AND INVOLVING A BROADER NETWORK OF FUNDING ORGANIZATIONS, AMONG OTHER MECHANISMS. BUT OUR AIM SHOULD BE TO ENCOURAGE NGOS NOT TO BE DEPENDENT ON USAID AND ITS PARTNERS, BUT TO THINK IN TERMS OF EVENTUAL INDEPENDENCE.

A FINAL COMPONENT OF OUR STRATEGY SEEKS TO TIE OUR TECHNICAL INITIATIVES TOGETHER, FOSTER ORIGINAL THINKING, AND BROADCAST

OUR WORK TO KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND POLICYMAKERS. PVC-ASHA'S RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, AND OUTREACH PROGRAM WILL DRAW ON PVOS' AND NGOS' RICH AND GROWING EXPERIENCE IN COMMUNITY-BASED DEVELOPMENT TO DISSEMINATE LESSONS LEARNED AND HEIGHTEN THE IMPACT OF OUR PARTNERS' WORK.

LET'S NOT FORGET THAT SUCCESSFUL OUTREACH RELIES IN LARGE PART ON TRACKING AND ACCURATELY REPORTING OUR JOINT ACHIEVEMENTS.

WE WANT TO WORK WITH YOU TO FIND WAYS TO RECOGNIZE THE ESSENTIAL WORK YOU'RE DOING, AND SHARE YOUR SUCCESSES WITH THE BROADER PVO/NGO COMMUNITY. HOW TO DO THIS, AND HOW WE CAN REPORT RESULTS AND IMPROVE MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEMS WILL BE ADDRESSED IN TOMORROW'S PLENARY SESSION.

ADDITIONALLY, PVC-ASHA'S EMILY MCPHIE WILL TALK TODAY ABOUT SOME OF THE RESEARCH INITIATIVES WE HAVE IN THE PIPELINE AND INVITE YOUR THOUGHTS ON POSSIBLE TOPICS OF INTEREST.

BUT LET ME STRESS THAT WE RISK LOSING HARD-WON MOMENTUM IF WE CANNOT DEMONSTRATE OUR EFFECTIVENESS AND TELL OUR STORY THROUGHOUT THE DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY, WITHIN USAID, ON

CAPITOL HILL, AND IN OTHER VENUES WHERE RESOURCE DECISIONS ARE

MADE.

PROMOTING NGO OWNERSHIP AND SELF-RELIANCE SHOULD SERVE AS

OUR COMMON MOTIVATOR. PVC-ASHA, USAID MISSIONS, AND PVOS CAN

DO A LOT TO BUILD NGOS, BUT NGOS THEMSELVES WILL DETERMINE

THEIR LONG-TERM VIABILITY THROUGH RESOURCEFULNESS,

COMPETENCE, COLLABORATION, AND OUTREACH.

ALL OF US IN THIS ROOM KNOW THAT PVOS AND NGOS ARE A POWERFUL

FORCE FOR CHANGE. YOU ADVOCATE FOR THE NEEDS OF THE POOR AND

MARGINALIZED, YOU PARTNER WITH BUSINESSES TO DEVELOP SOCIALLY

RESPONSIBLE PROGRAMS, YOU SERVE AS A FOUNDATION FOR PEACE AND

PROSPERITY.

OUR *CHALLENGE*, IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS AND BEYOND, WILL BE TO DRAW

ON WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED IN EACH OF OUR SECTORS AND APPLY

THESE LESSONS APPROPRIATELY TO A COMPLEX AND CHANGING NGO

SECTOR THAT DEMANDS INNOVATION. PLEASE LOOK TO US AS A

CENTRAL DISTRIBUTION POINT FOR DISSEMINATING INNOVATIVE BEST

PRACTICES, METHODOLOGIES AND TOOLS.

WE AT PVC-ASHA ARE COMMITTED TO SHARING OUR KNOWLEDGE BASE AND SUPPORTING YOU IN WHAT YOU DO BEST. WE LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU AND YOUR NGO PARTNERS AS WE GET STARTED ON THIS AMBITIOUS AGENDA IN COMING MONTHS.

PVC-ASHA

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Capable Partners and NGO Strengthening Programs

- Expand linkages among NGOs, networks, ISOs and the public and private sectors;

- Increase the dissemination of tested innovations, best practices, lessons learned and standards;

- Improve the quality of services provided by NGOs, networks and ISOs;

Capable Partners and NGO Strengthening Programs

- Improve the enabling environment through key legal, policy and program reforms; and

- Increase the capacity of NGOs, ISOs and networks to address conflict with development programming.

Capable Partners Program

- CAP provides a mechanism for Missions and central USAID offices to access specialized technical assistance in the areas of NGO capacity building.

- CAP provides direct organizational development assistance to participating NGOs, ISOs and networks.

NGO Sector Strengthening Program

- The program aims to help local, indigenous NGOs, networks and ISOs overseas become more efficient and effective in the delivery of development services.

- Unlike programs that focus on strengthening single NGOs, this program seeks to address the NGO sector more broadly.

Matching Grant Program

- The Matching Grant Program has helped U.S. private voluntary organizations (PVOs) develop their community-based programs overseas.

- PVOs have expanded successful programs in new places, initiated new projects, or undertaken experimental or innovative projects that offer potential for learning and replication.

Cooperative Development Program

- Supports the development of innovative approaches to the major challenges faced in cooperative development, their dissemination and integration into ongoing programs and projects.

Cooperative Development Program

- Focuses on developing, implementing and extending workable solutions to key problems such as restrictive cooperative law and regulations; policy-based governance; raising member equity participation as a major element in self-reliance; achieving scale consistent with quality; and reducing dependency that can result from external assistance.

Ocean Freight and Denton Programs

- The Denton Program allows private U.S. citizens and organizations to use space available on U.S. military cargo planes to send humanitarian goods and equipment to countries worldwide.

Ocean Freight and Denton Programs

- Funds are used to reimburse the PVO's cost to transport donated commodities, such as medical supplies, agricultural equipment, educational supplies and building equipment, to developing countries.

- The program leverages resources many times the size of USAID funding-on average 50 to 1.

American Schools and Hospitals Abroad Program

- Since its inception, ASHA has helped some 200 libraries, schools and medical centers in more then 60 countries worldwide.

- ASHA currently manages a portfolio of more than 100 grants and continues to award approximately 25 new grants every year.

2003 PVO CONFERENCE:
PVC–ASHA VERIFICATION, DOCUMENTATION AND UTILIZATION OF INFORMATION

Emily McPhie and Dana Ott, PVC-ASHA staff

PVC has spent the last year putting the final touches on its new strategy and getting new mechanisms in place to implement this strategy. One of our major immediate tasks now is to come up with a way to prove that we're actually achieving this strategy – it's great for us to say "here are the results we plan to achieve" – but AID expects us to be able to document those results over time as well. Thus, we are working right now to develop a Performance Management Plan or PMP which will allow us to aggregate the work of the wide variety of activities we fund into a few relatively simple indicators that we can track over the next several years, and which someone outside PVC and the PVO community can look at and see the importance and significance of what we're doing.

Those of you less familiar with AID-speak may be asking - what is a PMP? A PMP is a "performance management tool used by an Operating Unit and Strategic Objective team to help plan and manage the process of assessing and reporting progress towards achieving a Strategic Objective" Simply put, it's a way to measure if your activities are actually having the impact you anticipated. The need to measure our results has been an increasing focus government wide. USAID revised its internal programming policies beginning in the early 1990's following a broader U.S. Government effort (championed by then Vice-President Al Gore) to reinvent the way the public sector works by looking at private sector experience. As part of this revolution, government agencies are required to focus their planning processes and organizational structures on intended program results. In other words, we need to be able to say what we are getting for spending the people's money. This is an important goal and a worthwhile one. The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), passed by Congress in 1993, holds federal agencies accountable for achieving program results and requires federal agencies to define program goals and measure performance toward their achievement on an annual basis.

USAID has been a leader in this area, and yet our performance measurement challenges are some of the most complex in the U.S. government. Working in the number and variety of countries that we do, in the number of areas that we do, with the number of partners that we do makes telling our story in a coherent way a real challenge. The need to "roll-up" the results we achieve in the field to larger Agency achievements that can be reported in a meaningful and concise way has been an ongoing challenge for USAID. We tell you all this because in many ways the experience of PVC mirrors that of the Agency. PVC, as you have heard yesterday and today, implements a diverse portfolio that cuts across the agency sectorally, geographically and thematically.

This presents us with a great challenge in reporting our results, but also a great opportunity. The challenge for us as an office is to figure out how to take all of the amazing achievements of our partners and convey both the depth and breadth of those achievements to our Washington management. This is critically important, because if

we want to continue supporting your efforts we need to be able to demonstrate our achievements and tell our story. We want to work with you and get your input on the best ways to do that, not as a one-off kind of thing, but on a continuing basis. We really are all in this together.

The diversity of programs is our reporting challenge. But it is also our greatest asset for learning. We have a unique opportunity to examine activities across the spectrum of contexts and learn about what works and where it works and why. If we can, in partnership with you, synthesize and disseminate those lessons we will have made a major contribution to development knowledge. We look forward to doing that.

Further, while we must develop this PMP to verify the results we're achieving with our funds under the new strategy, we also know that activities funded under PVC's earlier strategies and the PVO-cooperative community in general are already working together in enhancing NGO capacities; this is something that PVC funding has supported for years, although the previous strategies may not have as clearly or explicitly stated this as the focus. Thus, in addition to the new strategy and the new implementation and results monitoring mechanisms we are putting in place, we have a body of experience and knowledge from past grants that we need highlight and share. As a result, we will be actively pursuing a variety of research topics related to organizational sustainability.

We'd like to begin by eliciting inputs and experiences from those of you who have already been working in this area for many years. We have a list of questions and topics that have occurred to us (see attachment, below). If any of you in the PVO community have thoughts on any of these topics, we'd appreciate hearing what your experiences have been and what you've learned. If you think our topics are not the key ones, we would be glad to hear what you think the main topics are.

The topics and questions we have raised thus far come from PVO reports we have read and from PVO meetings we have attended, in which we have heard trends and themes that we would like to be collecting and reporting more systematically. As we gather these themes, we will check back with many of you to verify what we've heard and to be sure we're telling the story correctly. Then we'd like to start sharing these organizational stories with others, e.g., missions, other USAID/Washington offices, other donors.

Some examples of the kinds of themes we've been hearing already:

(1) NGO ownership and commitment to a specific approach is essential to the sustainability of service delivery – and perhaps to the sustainability of the organization itself;

(2) organizational development takes time, and perhaps we need to scale back our expectations for service delivery and technical results to allow the time needed to strengthen the NGO adequately and effectively; and

(3) organizations in conflict areas are probably especially weak and there may be specific things we need to be sure to strengthen first, and perhaps fast, before we attempt to deliver services through NGOs in particularly unstable areas.

Many of these themes we identify may seem obvious to all of us since we work in the area of organizational development. However, these themes may also be the very

things that are so obvious that we don't share them with others who may be focusing exclusively on delivering services and don't have the time or the expertise to focus on the organizational side.

As we think more about the lessons we've already learned and things we already know, we can be looking for ways not only to disseminate this body of knowledge but also for broader ways to put it into action, for example, in new strategies and activities being developed throughout the donor community. As part of this effort, we may want to think about how we can and should be drawing in additional relevant partners– e.g., private sector, local governments, other donors -- to use our organizational sustainability experience to enhance their own development efforts. For example, where appropriate, we might consider encouraging American medical and educational facilities – universities, hospitals, research institutions, for example – to combine forces with us to improve health care, education, and job-training opportunities. One idea might be to try linking ASHA-funded university and hospital programs with more local-level NGO programs to improve vertical health and education-job skills programs that strengthen overall health and education systems in a country. We may especially want to be working more closely with the sector-specific experts to ensure that sustainability is given a higher profile so that the technical results being achieved can be maintained beyond the period of donor funding.

We look forward to working with you all in the coming year in strengthening NGOs and networks of NGOs and furthering their ability to deliver development services sustainably over the long term; we also look forward to working with you in learning from one another, teasing out and finding ways to best articulate some of the organizational development themes and lessons we've learned but perhaps haven't stated as clearly or as loudly as we could have; and we look forward to finding ways to most effectively disseminate these lessons to as wide an audience as possible in order to share our own skills and strengths to the benefit of the development cause.

Attachment:
PVC-ASHA Short-Term Research Topics

(1) Definitions of organizational development and capacity building – There are a wide variety of definitions of "organizational development" and "capacity building" and what they entail/include. Are there any observations and experiences that would help to reach better -- more consistent and clearly defined – understandings of "organizational development" and/or "capacity building" that would help facilitate implementation across countries, sectors and/or PVOs/NGOs/donors?

(2) "Thresholds" of NGO development – Is there a minimum level of NGO "capacity," below which USAID and PVOs should not attempt to do service delivery business with/through the NGO? If so, what is that "threshold" level? What does it involve (e.g., are there some specific "capacity" components – financial, organizational, strategic, human resource – that are more critical than others)? Is there a minimum level of NGO capacity required before networks can be effective and productive?

(3) Minimum standard for "survivability" – Is there a minimum level of NGO "capacity," below which the NGO is too fragile to withstand natural or man-made shocks (e.g., conflict)? On the other hand, is there a minimum level of NGO "capacity", above which the NGO can withstand natural or man-made shocks? If so, what is this level? And what does it involve, in terms of specific components of capacity? Are there any lessons learned on the costs and/or benefits of network on "survivability"? (Yes, 3 is very similar to 2; the primary difference is that 3 is asking about the NGO failing completely as an organization, while 2 is less extreme, focusing only on adequate service delivery.)

(4) Relative factors in organizational development/capacity building – Are there some components of organizational capacity that should be built or strengthened prior to others? Are there some components that should receive priority over others? Do we know anything about relative resource emphasis on one component of capacity over others that is worth sharing with other PVOs, missions and donors?

(5) Best practices – Are there any best – or most promising – practices in organizational development, sustainability, and/or capacity building that can be distilled and shared? Are there lessons learned on what works – and what doesn't – that should be documented?

(6) Sectoral differences – Is there any reason to believe that capacity building differs with the type of services being delivered? Do NGOs working in one sector (e.g., health) typically have more/less trouble with one component of capacity building than an NGO working in another sector (e.g., microfinance)? If so, is there any evidence on why such differences occur? Are there any lessons that can be drawn from this evidence?

(7) PVO/NGO perceptions of organizational sustainability/capacity building – Are there significant differences in how PVOs (and donors) perceive organizational development/capacity building and how local NGOs and other host country institutions perceive it? If so, what are these differences? And do they affect our collective ability to actually provide improved service delivery? Are there observations on how any differences in perceptions can be overcome or at least managed productively?

January 29, 2001, President George W. Bush signed an Executive Order establishing the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives to lead "a determined attack on need" by strengthening and expanding the role of faith-based and community organizations in addressing human needs domestically and internationally.

FBCI

"If your program is a faith-based program and it changes people's lives ... we ought to say thank you ... you can have equal access to money, and you don't even have to change your mission"

President George W. Bush

July 29, 2002

USAID Faith-based Partnerships

USAID has a long history of partnering with faith-based organizations.

Well known organizations such as Catholic Relief Services and Lutheran World Relief have been successfully partnering with USAID since 1977 to alleviate human need and suffering in projects ranging from food security to health issues.

Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

Mission:

1. Level the playing field so that FBO/CBOs can compete on an equal footing with other NGOs for federal funds.

Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

Mission:

2. Identify and remove barriers and obstacles FBO/CBOs experience when competing for federal funds.

Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

Mission:

3. Reach out to faith-based and community-based groups and encourage them to compete for federal funds.

Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

Mission:

4. Provide technical assistance to FBO/CBOs.

Clerical Office Training by Redeemer Institutional COGIC Complex

White House photo by Tina Hager

What Has Changed?

1. The religious character or mission of faith-based organizations can no longer be used as a reason to disqualify them from receiving federal money.
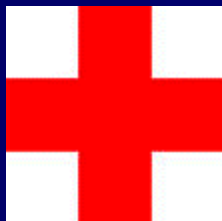
What Has Changed?

2. Faith-based groups may make religiously based employment decisions and receive federal funds.

What Has <u>Not</u> Changed?

1. **Federal money cannot be used to fund religious programs or proselytizing efforts.**

What Has <u>Not</u> Changed?

2. FBO/CBOs must report on how they spent federal money.
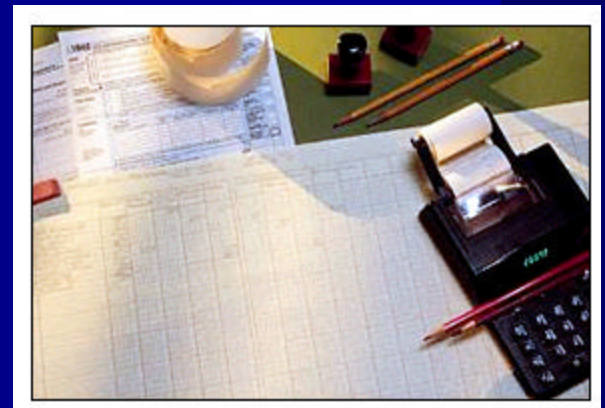
Words from the Administrator

"President Bush's executive order to establish a center for faith-based and community initiatives at the U.S. Agency for International Development will enhance our current partnership with non-government and private voluntary organizations.

USAID's long-standing successful partnerships with private voluntary organizations, including faith-based organizations, have been highly effective and efficient in implementing USAID programs around the world which non-government organizations are uniquely qualified to pursue.

These partnerships help USAID maximize its resources."
                    Andrew Natsios, December 12, 2002

USAID
Faith-Based and Community Initiative

Armies of Compassion reaching out to the international community through USAID sponsored programs.

USAID Center For Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

USAID Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

Director Mike Magan

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2003 PVO CONFERENCE:
USAID MISSION PERSPECTIVES ON LOCAL NGOS

Adele Liskov, Deputy Director, Office of Private Voluntary Cooperation-American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (PVC-ASHA), moderated a panel discussion among five U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission directors on USAID partnerships with private voluntary organizations (PVOs) and local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). A summary follows.

Terry Myers, Mission Director, USAID/Russia

Mr. Myers commented that, in countries where he has worked, USAID spends 70 to 80 percent of its resources working through NGOs or targeting NGOs. He said NGOs play a key role in mobilizing citizens and offer unique technical skills, local experience, leverage, and a commitment to establishing good governance.

USAID Mission Directors Panel

David Adams, USAID/Haiti

Dawn Liberi, USAID/Nigeria

Terry Myers, USAID/Russia

Denny Robertson, USAID/Caucasus

Andrew Sisson, USAID/REDSO

USAID asks NGOs to provide four things: service delivery, representation and advocacy, mobilization of community groups, and accountability. Missions work with NGOs on different levels, either through unsolicited proposals or through requests for applications (RFAs). Constraints on working with NGOs include tense relationships with local governments. Local regulations regarding taxes and visas can affect how NGOs work, as can limits on freedom of expression or assembly. Additionally, local NGOs are often weak and don't have appropriate financial and management controls.

USAID faces a challenge in getting local governments to understand the role of NGOs, and in encouraging NGO sustainability. Mobilizing domestic financial support is often difficult. Missions can provide oversight, guidance and coordination to NGOs but need to offer greater clarity and transparency in grants administration. Missions' ultimate objective should be building local support for civil society and ensuring NGOs are sustainable and effective after USAID supports ends.

Dawn Liberi, Mission Director, USAID/Nigeria

Ms. Liberi commented that the Nigeria Mission recently approved a new 5-year strategy. About 25 percent of the Mission's budget is allocated toward working with U.S. PVOs and 500 local NGOs. Management capacity in the Mission is a key consideration in determining how and when to work with NGOs.

The Mission expects NGOs to provide services, local capacity building, institutional development, transparency, accountability and sustainability. Local capacity building is the most critical element in this list.

The Nigeria Mission is experiencing a lot of growth in HIV/AIDS programs, many of which are implemented with the help of NGOs. Mission staff are looking for creative ways to build local partnerships in this area. However, Ms. Liberi warned PVOs to stick to their areas of expertise, instead of simply "following the money."

Ms. Liberi encouraged PVOs to establish public-private partnerships and consortia before approaching USAID. Unsolicited proposals are welcome; this is a good way to draw out innovative ideas. Finally, she encouraged NGOs to develop individual strategies for sustainability. Ms. Liberi noted that training local NGOs in grant writing is one way to build sustainability.

Denny Robertson, Mission Director, USAID/Caucasus

Mr. Robertson said he has a bias toward PVOs and NGOs. He noted that, in South Africa in the 1980s, he developed an appreciation for what local NGOs can do. In addition, he said he'd seen PVOs play a key role in reconstructing Cambodia.

NGOs' role in transition economies can be especially helpful; the primary goal in these situations is to build local capacity. In the new foreign policy environment, PVOs must make sure their programs are politically relevant.

One challenge for USAID is to create local partnerships that comply with procurement regulations. The USAID Mission in Romania established a successful health care partnership by offering a competitively awarded cooperative agreement in place of a contract. Mr. Robertson recommended this approach for other Missions. Neither PVOs nor USAID staff members necessarily know all the rules and regulations of grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts administration.

PVOs offer versatility, technical expertise, consultative approaches, and a favorable image. Weaknesses include a hesitancy to use funding to strengthen NGO operations. Finally, PVOs need to do a better job of sharing credit with USAID in publicizing their development work.

Andrew Sisson, Mission Director, USAID/REDSO

Mr. Sisson noted that he helped start USAID's program in Kosovo after the conflict there ended. He currently directs the REDSO Mission in Nairobi, Kenya. The Mission assists USAID Missions in East, Central and Southern Africa; operates regional programs to build the capacity of African regional organizations to address food insecurity, health issues, and conflict; and serves as the USAID bilateral Mission for the conflict states of Sudan, Burundi, Somalia and Djibouti.

Mr. Sisson said building local NGO capacity strengthens democracy, improves governance, and brings impressive returns on USAID's investment. He cited two examples of successful NGO activities: one program in Malawi supported an NGO to lobby the government to change its electoral law, while a program in Kosovo worked with an NGO to end Albanian revenge attacks on Serbs.

Mr. Sisson said he had seen USAID provide direct grants to NGOs as well as work through a PVO to provide sub-grants to many local NGOs. He said he prefers the second, "umbrella grant" approach because USAID is able to reach many more local

NGOs than on a one-to-one basis. It's important for USAID to choose the "right" NGOs to work with. Mr. Sisson said he uses the three "I's" as criteria for selecting NGO partners: integrity, intellectual leadership, and impact.

USAID must be wary of NGOs that are fronts for local governments or terrorist groups. This was a problem in Kosovo and is currently a concern in Sudan. Additionally, USAID must be sure that NGOs are focused on achieving real impact.

PVOs need a range of skills to be effective, including knowledge of the local scene, technical skill, local language capability, and a willingness to hire local staff in key positions. The PVO-NGO relationship works best when PVOs have local partners; this enhances credibility.

NGO programs also need exit strategies. PVOs should not provide too much funding, but should focus on providing experience and ideas. Also, technical assistance and funding should not be provided over too much time; this can promote dependency. Decisions should be made as quickly as possible.

Working in post-conflict states requires caution. Urgency to rebuild may lead to an overwhelming influx of donors, a proliferation of local NGOs that may not be credible, hasty proposals, thin knowledge of local conditions, reliance on expatriate staff, and weak donor coordination. Too much reliance on expatriate staff causes great resentment and undermines local capacity.

Finally, Mr. Sisson mentioned that the host country policy environment is extremely important for strengthening NGO capacity. Donors and PVOs can help to advocate for new laws that promote NGO vitality. USAID and PVOs need to be humble, look hard for local leaders, and try to understand the local context.

David Adams, Mission Director, USAID/Haiti

Mr. Adams noted that, since the mid-1990s, local NGOs have prospered in Haiti and have contributed to significant declines in infant mortality and childhood malnutrition. USAID's program in Haiti – funded at about $70 million per year – focuses heavily on health and nutrition, but also implements activities in agriculture, microfinance and primary education. Haiti is one of 14 "emphasis" countries designated under the Bush Administration's global HIV/AIDS strategy. About 30 local health NGOs have established a "shadow national health network" in Haiti.

PVOs such as CARE and Catholic Relief Services have long been active in providing food aid and humanitarian assistance in Haiti, but are increasingly involved in development.

The Health Systems 2004 Project, implemented by Management Sciences for Health, provides competitive grants to 30 health NGOs annually and is a model for other fragile states. Grantees must meet stringent performance criteria established in collaboration with the Ministry of Health.

About eight public-private partnerships are currently operating in the health sector, providing training and supplies to health facilities, and assisting the Ministry of Health in improving service delivery.

NGO sustainability is a challenge for PVOs working in Haiti; many NGOs are heavily reliant on U.S. assistance. About 80 percent of USAID's food aid program is monetized. Because USAID budgeting is difficult to predict, it is increasingly important for NGOs to look for private, local sources of funding and for PVOs to develop exit strategies.

In collaboration with the Pan American Development Foundation, USAID has established a partnership with a local NGO, a for-profit institution, and members of the Haitian diaspora in the United States. The partnership currently focuses on rebuilding schools, but plans are underway to refurbish clinics and hospitals as well. This is an example of a model public-private partnership.

Questions/Comments

Ms. Liskov asked the panel to elaborate on *how* to develop local NGO capacity. She suggested that there may not be a consensus as to how to define capacity building. Some organizations focus on achieving technical results, while others support institutional strengthening apart from technical programs. She asked, Can capacity building be accomplished without pursuing leadership, organizational learning, and autonomy ?

Mr. Myers responded that it depends on the state of the local NGO. Some NGOs simply don't have the ability to manage money. In cases like these, USAID should look at ways to help NGOs without spending a lot of time on accountability. USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives has done this through providing grants to NGOs in East Timor for items like motorcycles and computers. Other NGOs don't need technical assistance, but need help with grant writing or management training. In other cases, NGOs need help with building networks.

> *NGOs play a key role in mobilizing citizens and offer unique technical skills, local experience, leverage, and a commitment to establishing good governance.*
>
> -- Terry Myers, Mission Director, USAID/Russia

Mr. Adams commented that the strength of an organization rests on the strength of its personnel. PVOs in Haiti have done a good job of finding and hiring talented local staff. Trained local staff can contribute to local capacity by branching out and establishing their own NGOs.

Ms. Liberi commented that USAID and PVOs should focus on helping NGOs build efficient systems to attract funding over the long term. Local personnel may be hired away by international donors or the United Nations, but strong systems will remain.

Mr. Robertson noted that within transition economies, NGOs are often viewed with suspicion, so strengthening performance is critical.

One participant commented on several barriers to NGO strengthening, including increased competition between PVOs and NGOs. Many "successful" PVO-NGO partnerships are carried out by non-profit consulting firms or non-service delivery PVOs.

Service-delivery PVOs, however, struggle to develop local NGO partnerships because NGO strengthening activities conflict with their organizational mission to carry out operations. This is how PVOs raise funds, and this is what their boards expect of them. PVOs have been struggling with this problem for at least 20 years, without much progress. USAID must confront the issue and help PVOs figure out how to change the way they operate.

A second barrier to NGO strengthening is emerging as local NGOs bypass USAID and U.S. PVOs to seek help directly from other technical assistance providers (i.e., facilitators, trainers). Finally, stringent donor requirements regarding numbers and results can impede the pace of NGO strengthening.

Mr. Sisson said he had seen successful umbrella projects where U.S. PVOs formed a consortium with other PVOs to round out their skill set. Mr. Adams stressed that the situation will vary by country. In the case of Haiti's food program, few local partners are available to work with PVOs.

Ms. Liberi noted that USAID worked with two large HIV/AIDS NGOs in Uganda who attracted so many clients that they outgrew their capacity. Because their accountability was at risk, USAID recommended that they partner with a U.S. PVO to build the appropriate capacity.

Mr. Adams added that "brain drain" continues to be a challenge for NGOs seeking to retain talented staff.

One participant asked about the likelihood of local philanthropic organizations funding NGOs after donors have withdrawn. Mr. Sisson noted that there was an interesting shake-up of NGOs in post-conflict Kosovo. When donors started to withdraw, only the strongest NGOs survived to attract additional donor funds. Local support in Kosovo has been slow to materialize because the private sector was destroyed during the war.

Mr. Myers said he knew of several sustainability success stories. He cited the example of a media NGO in Indonesia that attracted support from local companies to broadcast pro-democracy programs. Mr. Adams encouraged USAID and PVOs to focus on measuring performance and creating ownership among NGO employees.

Mr. Myers asked the audience to comment on the future role of USAID. One participant said USAID had become more responsive to the PVO/NGO community under Administrator Natsios. He said he appreciated USAID's emphasis on conflict mitigation and sustainability. He commented that USAID holds NGOs abroad to higher standard than would be applied to U.S. NGOs, and stressed that PVOs need to "be there for the long haul." He added that USAID and PVOs need to reach consensus on how to define sustainability. He suggested that it should be defined as "not leaving the region."

Mr. Sisson reiterated that exit strategies should be an integral part of sustainability. Ms. Liberi said the foreign policy establishment is rethinking what is means to disengage. She said USAID must be flexible about defining sustainability in different country contexts.

One participant asked about USAID support for local NGOs that take positions that challenge foreign governments. Ms. Liberi said the political changes that occurred in

South Africa could not have happened without U.S. support of local NGOs agitating for change. Panelists agreed that it is a sensitive issue and will vary according to U.S. foreign policy objectives in each country. Missions need to apply astute political management in cases where NGO advocacy might pose a threat. This includes securing the support of the U.S. Ambassador and key colleagues.

One participant asked about prioritizing among programs to build capacity of individual NGOs versus those designed to build the NGO sector as a whole. Mr. Sisson said it's possible to do both in one program, but if the country environment is particularly difficult (e.g., in Kosovo and Sudan), PVOs may want to focus on the sectoral approach.

One participant asked how capacity building can be appropriately documented and suggested that PVOs and USAID might not be patient enough to wait for results to materialize. Mr. Adams commented that GHESKIO, an HIV/AIDS NGO in Haiti, had evolved into a model local NGO with seed money from USAID, but the process took years. Mr. Robertson and Ms. Liberi reiterated that USAID must take a long view with respect to NGO strengthening. Developing a cadre of trained local professionals can have a significant impact on the NGO sector as a whole.

Another participant commented that USAID, in its Request for Proposals (RFPs), only provides a month for PVOs to develop NGO proposals and establish related consortia. This timeline is not optimal. Panelists agreed that the proposal process could be lengthened, but applicants should make a specific request and detail why more time would make a difference.

On the issue of post-9/11 changes, one participant noted that federal rules and regulations affecting NGOs are now being drafted from a counter-terrorism perspective. As a result, every 501(c)(3) organization is exposed to a high threshold and legal liability. He suggested that PVOs take a more active role in informing the rulemaking process in this area.

Another participant remarked that his organization isn't large enough to have contacts in country; it would be helpful for USAID to match PVOs with local partners. Mr. Robertson remarked that he solicited PVO/NGO input on the design of a recent RFP, but no one commented due to concerns about protecting intellectual property.

Finally, one participant remarked that the attacks of 9/11 led to a significant decline in foundation funding for PVOs. New visa regulations are also posing problems for PVOs conducting lateral training programs.

2003 PVO CONFERENCE:

VOLUNTEERS FOR PROSPERITY

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Administrator Andrew Natsios introduced John Bridgeland, Assistant to the President and Director, USA Freedom Corps, to discuss the Volunteers for Prosperity initiative. A summary of Mr. Bridgeland's presentation follows.

Mr. Bridgeland began by praising Mr. Natsios for his leadership at USAID. He provided an overview of the USA Freedom Corps, which was established in 2002 to connect Americans with volunteer service opportunities. In the aftermath of 9/11, Americans have volunteered in large numbers to serve their communities. Eight hundred Citizen Corps Councils have been established in all 56 states and territories to respond to disasters, Medical Reserve Corps are active in 165 communities, and neighborhood watch programs have doubled.

President Bush has pledged to double the capacity of the Peace Corps to 15,000 volunteers. Last year, the Peace Corps received its largest funding allocation since its inception 41 years ago. This year, the Peace Corps has received 216,000 requests for applications for 7,000 volunteer slots.

On May 21, 2003, President Bush announced the Volunteers for Prosperity (VFP) initiative to deploy highly skilled American professionals—doctors, nurses, and computer technicians—for flexible-term assignments (i.e., weeks or months) abroad. Many people decide against volunteering with the Peace Corps because the two-year commitment is too lengthy. VFP provides an alternative. VFP will be administered through U.S. private voluntary organizations (PVOs), targeting key initiatives where new federal resources are available to implement the Administration's "prosperity and health agenda."

VFP will be coordinated by USAID. In September 2003, President Bush signed an executive order to: 1) establish VFP offices in USAID, the State Department, the Department of Commerce, and the Department of Health and Human Services; 2) establish as a grant criterion the capacity of PVOs to use volunteers to carry out programs; and 3) establish reporting requirements.

PVOs can apply for VFP funding under six federal initiatives: the Emergency Plan for HIV/AIDS Relief; the Middle East Partnership Initiative; the Water for the Poor Initiative; Trade for African Development; the Digital Freedom Initiative; and the Millennium Challenge Account.

Since the President's announcement, 42 PVOs have expressed interest in signing on with VFP, yielding a baseline of 10-11,000 volunteers. Mr. Bridgeland said he hopes to double the number of VFP volunteers in one year. The VFP web site is operational (see www.vfp.gov).

Finally, Mr. Bridgeland noted that the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation issues the President's Volunteer Service Awards to youth under age 14 who complete 50 hours of volunteer service in 1 year, and to adults who complete 100

hours of service in 1 year. PVOs can sign up to be certifying organizations for this award. Information can be found at: www.usafreedomcorps.gov. Mr. Bridgeland added that PVOs interested in VFP can call Ken Lanza at USA Freedom Corps at 202-456-7831.

2003 PVO CONFERENCE:
ISSUES AND RESOURCES FOR PVO PARTNERS

Throughout the 2003 PVO Conference, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) staff presented information on grant opportunities and registration requirements for U.S. private voluntary organizations (PVOs). A summary follows.

PVO Registration

The Office of Private Voluntary Cooperation (PVC)-American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA) has begun implementing several changes to the PVO registration process. Revised final rules for registration will be issued by early November 2003.

Changes will include the following:

o   USAID will limit initial registration to organizations with 501(c)(3) status, but will retain eligibility for cooperative development organizations. Any PVOs currently registered under non-501(c)(3) status will be grandfathered into the new registry, and will not be required to re-apply.

o   Organizations must be incorporated for at least 18 months to be eligible for registration. Organizations undergoing an A-133 will have 9 months to submit annual reports to PVC for registration purposes. For those not undergoing an A-133, the 6-month deadline still applies.

o   PVOs will be required to submit an audit as part of the registration process. For PVOs with annual revenues for international programs of $50,000 or less, an audit is not required.

PVO registration regulations are posted on the USAID web site (www.usaid.gov, Keyword: PVC), as is the full PVO registry.

Grant Opportunities in Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade

USAID's Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade (EGAT) offers two programs designed to improve the performance of microenterprise field programs. The Implementation Grant Program makes grants to PVOs and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) through a Request for Proposals (RFP) announced every year. The aim is to increase the availability of financial services and business development services, through increasing scale, reach, or efficiency and profitability of service providers. Grants are market-based; applicants must address how institutions will operate within a market and achieve sustainability.

Grants range from $200,000 to $2 million. Since the program's inception, about 100 grants have been awarded, totaling $100 million.

A second EGAT activity--the Practitioner Learning Program--is administered by the Small Enterprise Education and Promotion (SEEP) network. Grants are generally for under $250,000, and address two themes: conducting market assessments and putting microfinance client assessments to work. SEEP announces its RFP annually; information is available at www.seepnetwork.org .

Grant Opportunities in Global Health

USAID's global health programs are currently receiving unprecedented amounts of funding. HIV/AIDS programs are now funded at $800 million, up from less than $100 million 3 years ago, and the Child Survival program is being revitalized. USAID is also focusing on developing public-private activities to combat infectious disease and is examining the health impacts of family planning.

USAID's Bureau for Global Health is trying to make its programs more accessible and efficient. New mechanisms include the Annual Program Statement, which allows faster implementation of Requests for Proposals (RFPs). The Bureau will also offer more leader-associate grants and a new flexible fund for PVOs, which is Mission-driven.

The Bureau implements child survival, maternal health, HIV/AIDS, infectious disease, and family planning programs. PVOs should keep these priorities in mind when applying for assistance.

The Bureau's "User's Guide" serves as a road map for PVOs looking for grant opportunities (available at www.usaid.gov, Keyword: Health. Click on Publications). The guide describes USAID's child survival grant program and the Communities Responding to HIV/AIDS grant program. PVOs should also seek out relevant Annual Program Statements on the USAID web site, under procurement. Three draft global health Requests for Applications (RFAs) will be released on the USAID web site in October 2003.

Current PVC-ASHA Grant Opportunities

➤ A 2003 **Cooperative Development Program RFA** will be issued in early November at www.fedgrants.gov. The Cooperative Development Program's mission is to deliver the quality and magnitude of support needed to attract the resources necessary to enhance cooperative development worldwide.

The RFA focuses on financing learning and encourages cooperative law reform; participation of U.S. cooperative organizations; partnerships between U.S. cooperatives, PVOs, universities and other interested parties; and a more diverse funding base.

Eligibility for the RFA is limited to U.S. cooperatives or organizations with substantial membership and/or financial links to U.S. cooperatives and/or their associations. Applicants must also demonstrate a 5-year track record in overseas cooperative development.

➤ A 2003 **Ocean Freight Reimbursement RFA** was distributed at the PVO Conference (available at www.usaid.gov, Keyword: PVC). The deadline for applications is December 5, 2003.

The program pays transportation charges on shipments by PVOs registered with USAID to further the efficient use of U.S. voluntary contributions for development, relief and rehabilitation. PVO applicants must be registered with USAID at the time of submission, and must receive at least 20 percent of annual financial support from non-U.S. government sources.

Programs must be implemented in USAID-designated countries and involve a partnership with a local government, NGO or community group. PVOs must submit a consignee affidavit for each program, along with a duty-free status certification for each destination country.

Ocean Freight Reimbursement grants cannot be used in countries not on USAID's eligible country list, in countries not approved by PVC, or in situations where the PVO charges consumers a fee for commodities. Grants cannot be used to support commodities funded by USAID or U.S. government program funds, or to ship religious materials or P.L. 480 food aid.

➤ Ongoing **American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA) grants** increase the ability of overseas schools, libraries, and hospital centers to demonstrate U.S. advancements in education and medical knowledge.   Twenty-five new ASHA grants are awarded each year to U.S.-based organizations to build library and medical facility infrastructure and to provide supplies for these institutions (go to www.usaid.gov, Keyword: ASHA).

Infrastructural grants for academic buildings and medical facilities, and procurement grants for medical and educational equipment aim to:

- Build a technology base for integrated research and care in critical areas of medical science;
- Train independent thinkers with problem-solving abilities;
- Create a more efficient basis for communication and transfer of information between the U.S. and other countries; and
- Increase understanding between American peoples and those abroad.

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